SUBSTANCE

OF

Mr. CANNING's SPEECH,

IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1798,

ON

MR. TIERNEY's MOTION,

RESPECTING

CONTINENTAL ALLIANCES.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

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Mr. CANNING's SPEECH,

ON

MR. TIERNEY's MOTION;

" That it is the Duty of His Majeſty's Miniſters to adviſe
" His Majeſty, in the preſent Criſis, againſt entering
" into Engagements which may prevent or impede a
" Negotiation for Peace, whenever a Diſpoſition ſhall
" be ſhewn on the Part of the French Republic to treat
" on Terms conſiſtent with the Security and Intereſts of
" the Britiſh Empire."

MR. SPEAKER,

IF I might judge of the impreſſion made by the Honourable Gentleman's Speech, from the manner in which it has been received, and particularly from the unuſual degree of apathy and languor which has prevailed on that ſide of the Houſe on which he ſits; I ſhould be led to believe that the ardour manifeſted on this ſide of the

Houſe by my noble and honourable friends who roſe at the ſame time with me, was perhaps more than the occaſion required:—and I aſſure you, Sir, I ſhould not have preſſed myſelf upon your attention, if I had thought the occaſion one which demanded abilities like theirs;—if I had not felt that what arguments I have to ſtate in oppoſition to the Honourable Gentleman's Motion, are ſo clear and plain in themſelves, as to require little aid from any talents in the perſon who ſtates them.

The Motion of the Honourable Gentleman cannot be denied to be of an extraordinary nature; and he has certainly treated it in a very extraordinary manner. I conceive it to be conſonant as well to the rules of the Houſe, as to the reaſon of the thing, that the Houſe ſhould not be urged to the adoption of a new and unuſual meaſure, without its being, in the firſt place, eſtabliſhed, that there exiſts ſome neceſſity for adopting it, or that ſome advantage may be gained by doing ſo. I did expect, therefore, from the Honourable Gentleman, rather ſome ſolid reaſons for the meaſure which he has propoſed, than an anticipation of the objections which he thought might be urged againſt it. He has contented himſelf, however, with endeavouring to deſtroy the validity of ſeveral arguments which he has heard out of doors, and which he expects to hear to-night againſt the Motion

that

that he has made; but he has omitted, what ſeemed to me to be more peculiarly incumbent upon him, an explanation of the motives which induced him to make it.

I admit that the Honourable Gentleman has been not unſucceſsful in anticipating ſeveral of the moſt obvious and prominent objections againſt his Motion; I cannot think that he has been equally fortunate in removing them. I ſhall certainly have occaſion, in the courſe of what I have to ſay, to re-ſtate many or moſt of thoſe which he has anticipated, and not without the hope of eſtabliſhing them to the conviction of the Houſe. I ſhall follow him through theſe objections, as nearly as I can, in the ſame order in which he has brought them forward.

The firſt objection which he expects to hear, but upon which I am certainly not inclined to lay the greateſt ſtreſs, is the point of Conſtitutional Form. It is by no means my intention to contend, that the nature of the Honourable Gentleman's Motion, though extraordinary, is wholly unprecedented;—much leſs to deny the power and the right of the Houſe of Commons, to offer Its advice to His Majeſty, on any ſubject, either of Negotiation or of War. I know they have at ſeveral times interfered in both. It is, indeed, ſomewhat ſingular, that the Honourable Gentle-

man ſhould not himſelf have cited any of the former inſtances of ſuch an exerciſe of the right of Parliament. Perhaps he has ſome recollection that a peculiar ſort of fatality has, in almoſt every inſtance, ſeemed to attend interferences of this nature; that in almoſt every inſtance, from the Revolution to our own time, they have been either nugatory or miſchievous.

I will mention two only, out of the few that have occurred during this period: the firſt,—that which was neareſt, in point of time, to the Revolution; the other,—that which is neareſt to our own time; the firſt, an interference tending to prolong a War; the other, intended to accelerate a Peace.

The firſt, the warlike meaſure, was the famous Vote of the Houſe of Lords in 1707, "That no "Peace could be ſafe or honourable which ſhould "leave Spain and the Spaniſh Weſt Indies in the "poſſeſſion of the Houſe of Bourbon." It is hardly neceſſary to remind Gentlemen, that this Vote, carried by the heat and violence of party, had no effect whatever; that no manner of regard was paid to it, in the Peace which was afterwards negotiated:—And, whatever might be the faults of that Peace, or however loud the cry againſt the Miniſters who made it, I do not think that any man, who looks fairly and impartially

at

at that Peace now, will ſay, that it was any very great crime in thoſe Miniſters, that they did omit to carry this vote into execution.

The ſecond example to which I refer, is the Reſolution voted by the Houſe of Commons, reſpecting the "Independence of America." Of a tranſaction ſo recent it is hardly poſſible to ſpeak with the freedom of hiſtory. I ſpeak, probably, in the preſence of many who took part in favour of that Reſolution,—of ſome certainly, who oppoſed it. Who were right, or who were wrong, I do not preſume to determine. — But in one thing, I believe, thoſe who oppoſed and thoſe who promoted it will equally concur, — that the Vote which carried that Reſolution was an *unfortunate* Vote; and that it had an influence fatal to the intereſt of this Country, on the Peace which concluded the American War. This is a propoſition which thoſe who had to make that Peace muſt, I am ſure, contend to be true; and which thoſe who condemned that Peace would find it difficult to deny.

But whatever might be the force of Precedents, they would not of themſelves,—even if their bearing was as much in favour of Motions of this kind, as unfortunately it has been againſt them,—they would not of themſelves be ſufficient to juſtify

tify the Honourable Gentleman's Motion. It would, I preſume, be farther neceſſary for him to ſhew (as was ſhewn, or attempted to be ſhewn, in all former inſtances) that ſome neceſſity at preſent exiſts, which calls for ſuch an interference of the Houſe of Commons.

I can conceive ſuch a neceſſity to ariſe only from one of two circumſtances: either from the circumſtance of ſome Opening for Peace now preſenting itſelf, of which Miniſters do not ſhew themſelves enough diſpoſed to take advantage;—or from Miniſters having at former periods evinced a diſpoſition generally hoſtile to Peace, which this Motion is intended to cenſure or to controul.

That any ſuch Opening now exiſts, the Honourable Gentleman has not attempted to argue. I muſt, therefore, naturally have attributed his Motion to a falſe impreſſion remaining on his mind of the conduct of Miniſters in former Negotiations:—I muſt have conceived, that he retained a confuſed and perplexed recollection of what had paſſed at Liſle,—that he remembered ſomething indiſtinctly of an embarraſſment having been thrown in the way of the Negotiation by a queſtion about *Allies*,—but utterly forgot that the Allies who created this embarraſſment were the Allies of France and not of Great Britain;—and that, under this miſtake, he was bringing forward

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the reſtriction in the wrong place, and applying to this Country, a cure for the miſconduct of the Enemy.—But I am prevented from admitting even this foundation for his proceeding, by the approbation which the Honourable Gentleman has expreſſed of the Manifeſto publiſhed by this Government after the breaking off of the Negotiations at Liſle. The Honourable Gentleman diſtinctly and fairly acknowledges that Manifeſto to have exhibited undoubted proofs of the pacific diſpoſitions of His Majeſty's Miniſters.

And here give me leave to obſerve rather a ſingular argument, which grows out of the Honourable Gentleman's peculiar conduct and ſituation. He tells you that he brings forward this Motion as an "unconnected and unſupported individual," acting with no party or ſet of men whatever. By agreeing to the Motion, therefore, the advantage which we are to gain is his individual co-operation. It is hardly to be ſuppoſed that he will be more convinced of the pacific diſpoſition of Miniſters after this Reſolution ſhall have been adopted, than he was after the publication of the Manifeſto, which he has ſo warmly commended. What was the firſt ſtep that he took by way of co-operation after that Manifeſto was publiſhed? *He voted againſt the ſupply.*—Convinced, that His Majeſty had done all in His power to obtain Peace;—that He had gone almoſt beyond what could have been expected of

Him, in forbearance and moderation;—that He had ſhewn even after the victory of Lord Duncan, the moſt decided diſpoſition to make Peace, upon fair and reaſonable terms;—convinced, that the abrupt concluſion of the Negotiation at Liſle had been the act of the Enemy excluſively;—that the continuance of the calamities of War was to be attributed to the arrogance, and wickedneſs, and pride, of the Enemy alone;—that His Majeſty had no choice;—that He muſt of neceſſity continue to carry on a War which the mad ambition of that Enemy would not allow Him to terminate:—in this conviction, to enable His Majeſty to carry on the War, the Honourable Gentleman "unconnected and unſupported," individually, *voted againſt the ſupply*.

I do not mean to impeach the Honourable Gentleman's conduct in this inſtance. He had no doubt his reaſons for it. But I do mean to put it to the judgment of the Houſe, whether, if it ſhould be evident (as I truſt it will be) that no ſolid and general advantage is to be derived to the Country from our agreeing to the Honourable Gentleman's Reſolution,—there is much temptation held out to us to do ſo, by the proſpect of his future individual co-operation; whether it is worth while to adopt an unuſual, unneceſſary, and much more a miſchievous meaſure to evince our deſire for Peace,—in order to ſecure the Honourable Gentleman's *vote againſt the ſupply* for carrying on the War.

This,

This, however, would certainly be a very inferior conſideration, if there were any utility or advantage to be derived from the meaſure propoſed. I have not heard the Honourable Gentleman ſtate any advantage as likely to ariſe from it to the Country. As he has affirmed nothing of this kind, I have nothing of the kind to deny. But there is one way of conſidering what is advantageous to this Country, to which I confeſs I am very partial;—and the rather, perhaps, becauſe it does not fall in with the new and faſhionable philoſophy of the day. I know it is a doctrine of that large and liberal ſyſtem of ethics which has of late been introduced into the world, and which has ſuperſeded all the narrow prejudices of the antient ſchool,—that we are to conſider not ſo much what is good for our Country, as what is good for the *human race*;—that we are all children of one large family;—and I know not what other fancies and philanthropies, which I muſt take ſhame to myſelf for not being able to comprehend. I, for my part, ſtill conceive it to be the paramount duty of a Britiſh Member of Parliament to conſider *what is good for Great Britain*:—and where no immediate advantage is pointed out as obviouſly ariſing from any new meaſure that is propoſed for our adoption,—I hold it no bad teſt to examine in what way it bears upon the intereſts of *France*, and to conclude, however unphiloſophi-

cally, or illiberally, that what is good for *the Enemy*, cannot be very good for *Us*.

Now, Sir, I beg to have it underſtood,—and I aſſure the Honourable Gentleman,—that I am very far from meaning any thing perſonally diſreſpectful to him;—that I give him full credit for feeling, as ſtrongly as any man, every thing that he owes to his Country, for being as ready as any man to devote his talents and exertions to her ſervice. I appeal, therefore, not to his feelings, but to his judgment and ingenuity,—when I deſire him to conſider, whether he could poſſibly deviſe any meaſure (capable, at the preſent moment, of being patiently entertained by this Houſe or by the Public) which ſhould have a more direct and manifeſt tendency to benefit France, than the Motion which he has now brought forward? What could any man—any Member of this Houſe, (if it were poſſible to ſuppoſe that there ſhould be ſuch a Member in this Houſe) moſt perverſely devoted to the views of the Enemy, and bent upon exalting France at the expence of Great Britain,—what more effectual meaſure could ſuch a man take for ſuch a purpoſe, than by a Motion like the preſent?

For what is it that the French Directory appear by all their conduct, by all their publications, to dread and deprecate more than any other thing in the

the world? What is it that all their official and unofficial papers moſt labour to diſcredit? What —but the revival of a great and general Confederacy in Europe, of which England ſhould be the animating ſoul? Why ſhould We co-operate with the French Directory? What intereſt can We have in common with them, that ſhould induce us to take their work out of their hands and complete it for them? What advantage can it be to Us to daunt and diſpirit Europe; and to relieve the Directory from the apprehenſion of any powerful reſiſtance, or the neceſſity of any extenſive preparation; to maintain their influence abroad, and their authority at home?

I will put the queſtion in another way. I will ſuppoſe that we were now in the laſt year of the Monarchy of France, inſtead of the ſixth or ſeventh year, or whatever it may be, of the *French Republic, One and Indiviſible.* By the Monarchy I mean, of courſe, that cruel, wicked, profligate, abominable deſpotiſm, of which we have heard ſo many, and no doubt, ſo juſt complaints,—which oppreſſed France with I know not what unheard-of cruelties,—which inſulted England, and deſolated Europe, by crimes and calamities ſuch as can never be imputed to the French Republic. I will ſuppoſe that this Monarchy had received ſo formidable a blow as has been given to the Directory by the Victory of the Nile;—that its

fleets had been disgraced and defeated, in different expeditions against the British empire; — that its fairest provinces were in revolt;—that its subjects were universally discontented;—that its commerce was extinguished;—its revenue destroyed;—and its finances, by the confessions of its ablest financiers, in a state of utter and irrecoverable ruin and bankruptcy;—that against the Monarchy, thus situated, a general spirit was rising in Europe:—I will suppose that, under these circumstances, the Ministers of this Country had come down to this House, and suggested the propriety of such a measure of abjuration and self-denial as is now under consideration; and I will ask,—what would have been the clamour raised on the other side of the House? — how pointedly would the question have been put to ministers, 'What are you doing? Why 'do you interfere to arrest the downfal of this 'detestable tyranny? Look on only—do nothing '—and It will fall of itself. What business is it 'of yours to rescue from destruction a Power, 'so inordinate in its ambition, and so hostile 'to the happiness of Europe?'

Such would have been the language that we should have heard, if the Monarchy of France had been the object of forbearance, and if Ministers had been the persons to advise us to forbear. I will not press similar interrogations in such a way as to impute to any Gentleman improper and unjustifiable

unjuſtifiable partialities: — but I cannot help aſking, whether the *preſent* Government of France be indeed one, which has deſerved ſo well of this Country,—which, to take the queſtion more candidly, has deſerved ſo well of France,—which, in the ſtill more large and liberal cant of the day, has deſerved ſo well of *Humanity*—as that we ſhould feel ourſelves called upon to take ſo extraordinary a ſtep in its behalf? And I would farther aſk, whether,—whatever be the preſent degree of weakneſs or ſtability in the Government of France, (upon which I give no opinion)—whether the effect of this Motion muſt not be to prop its power, and to come to the aid of its unpopularity; whether, with this Vote of ſecurity in one hand, the Directory might not boldly hold out the Gazette of Lord Nelſon's Victory in the other, and call upon the People of France to balance what had been loſt with what had been gained?

But admitting, for the argument's ſake, the object of the Honourable Gentleman's Motion to be advantageous to this Country; it would remain to be ſeen how far that object is clearly expreſſed or underſtood, and how far the means which he ſuggeſts are calculated for attaining it. The Honourable Gentleman takes credit to himſelf for not limiting or defining, in any degree, the nature or terms of the Peace which it is the duty of His Majeſty's Miniſters to conclude. If

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he had not mentioned this omiſſion as a point on which he takes credit to himſelf, it is that which I ſhould have been tempted to ſelect for peculiar diſapprobation. It ſeems to me at leaſt a new and unuſual courſe of policy, inſtead of defining the end, to contract the means of action. It would have ſeemed more natural and more fair, to ſay beforehand, 'Such or ſuch is the Peace 'with which the Country would be contented, 'and which would be conſiſtent with its ſecurity 'and intereſts; but the mode of arriving at that 'Peace, is what muſt be left for His Majeſty's Mi-'niſters to deviſe,' this ſurely would be fairer than to ſay, in the language of the preſent Motion, 'I will not tell you what Peace you ought to 'make;—but I will take from you one great 'inſtrument for making any Peace at all.'

By this Motion what advice do you give to Miniſters, or what controul do you impoſe on them? Your advice is certainly not worth much,—when you only tell them how they ſhall *not* proceed; but ſay nothing of how they *ſhall* proceed, or whither they ſhall go. Your controul cannot be very effectual,—ſince it is *they*, it ſeems, after all, who are to remain the judges of what is "conſiſtent with the ſecurity and intereſts" of Great Britain.

Theſe intereſts and this ſecurity muſt neceſſarily be conſidered with relation to the different circumſtances of the Enemy and of Europe. What might

might be a ſecure Peace for Great Britain with France reduced in power, and Europe at liberty,—would no doubt be highly unſafe, againſt France in her preſent ſtate of force and aggrandizement, with great part of Europe at her feet, and the reſources of other Nations at her diſpoſal. It is equally clear, that it would be more difficult for Us, ſingle and unaſſiſted, to extort from France ſuch terms as would be conſiſtent with our intereſts, than to obtain the ſame terms, if backed by a powerful Confederacy in Europe.

The declaration conveyed to France by this Motion, that We are determined at all events to treat ſingly, would naturally inflame her pride and increaſe her demands. The declaration that we make no common cauſe with other Nations, would neceſſarily place thoſe Nations at her mercy or on her ſide.

The effect of the Motion muſt therefore be to diminiſh alike the probable advantages of the Peace to be obtained, and our power of obtaining it. It preſcribes a more difficult end to be accompliſhed, with leſs efficacious means. At the ſame time, it does not tend to haſten the concluſion of even ſuch a Peace, as with ſuch means might poſſibly be obtained;—for it leaves Miniſters at liberty to conclude no Peace, which *they* do not think "conſiſtent with the ſecurity

curity and intereſts" of the Country:—And if they ſhould chooſe to think, (which they very probably and very laudably might) that no Peace would deſerve this character, which ſhould not provide for the ſafety of Europe;—what aſſurance does this Motion give you againſt a hopeleſs prolongation of the war?

Sir, the Honourable Gentleman's purpoſe, if I at all comprehend it, required that he ſhould have made the latter part of his Motion as diſtinct as the beginning. If he had done ſo,—if he had fairly ſtated the idea which he has in his own mind,—I apprehend that, inſtead of the circumlocution, of a Peace "conſiſtent with ſecurity and intereſts, &c." we ſhould have heard of a *Separate Peace*.

I confeſs, this was what I was prepared to expect. I expected it the rather, from comparing the general reaſoning of the Honourable Gentleman with reſpect to *Separate War*,—with what is reported to have been ſaid upon the ſame topic in another place by a Noble Stateſman of great conſideration and celebrity;—a Stateſman, who to a life of political activity has had the advantage of adding an age of retirement and reflection.

This great Authority (I underſtand) recommended, as the only ſort of War that ſuited the

circumſtances of this Country,—a tight, ſnug, little, domeſtic, War;—in which our exertions ſhould be confined at home;—in which we ſhould not ſtretch an arm beyond the circumference of our own dominions,—but ſhould ſit down with our Navy collected about us, and turn round upon our own axis, without reference to the reſt of the world. The main advantage ſtated as likely to reſult from this ſyſtem was, that *our ſailors would ſpend their wages at home:*—the Noble Stateſman ought to have added, to heighten the glowing picture, that they would ſpend them *in exciſeable commodities.*

This ſyſtem of *Separate War* was evidently calculated to lead ultimately to *Separate Peace:* as indeed it's illuſtrious Promulgator avowed. I imagined that the Honourable Gentleman, in adopting the premiſes of the Noble Stateſman, muſt be prepared likewiſe to adopt his concluſion. I ſhould certainly diſapprove of both:—becauſe I cannot but apprehend that a War ſo very like Peace would lead to a Peace that would be very like War;—that a conteſt (if conteſt it might be called) in which we ſhould be afraid to employ our forces, would lead to a pacification at which we ſhould be afraid to diſband them. And this opinion I venture to entertain, in oppoſition to ſuch high authority;—becauſe I think I have on my ſide the

eternal and immutable truth,—that the objects of human desire are attainable only by human exertion;—that never yet did inaction beget repose, or a want of energy and spirit secure permanent and unmolested tranquillity.

The system of separation, however, is defended upon another ground. It is conceded with great candor, that the conduct of France is *very bad*; but it is at the same time contended, that the other Powers of Europe are *very bad too*; and that the less we have to do with either of them, the better. I must take leave, Sir, in the first place, to observe upon the affectation, which has grown up among those who argue against the War, of *pairing-off* the enormities of France against the imputed crimes of regular Governments. No sooner is any fresh act of atrocity, cruelty, perfidy, or injustice, on the part of the French Republic brought forward in argument, than recourse is had to some stale trite topic of declamation, which has been used a hundred and a hundred times, against Russia, Prussia, Austria, or the Old Government of France. During Robespierre's reign, the favourite *pair* for every one of his *noyades*, and *fusillades*, his crowded dungeons, and sweeping executions,—was the imprisonment of La Fayette! The partition of Poland too!—(a measure which I have no thoughts

of

of juſtifying) againſt how many deteſtable, impious, and tyrannical outrages, invaſions, confiſcations, rapines, and maſſacres, of the French Government, has not the partition of Poland been cited as a parallel! It has really, Sir, been called into ſervice ſo often, that it ought no longer to be conſidered as a *pair*. It is time to agree, that at leaſt in any future enormities of France, ſhe ſhall not have a ſet-off in the partition of Poland.

But after all, to what does this argument at beſt amount? The world is a bad world, and we are, therefore, to withdraw ourſelves from it. Good:—if this were indeed practicable; if it remained for us to chooſe whether we would make a part of this world or no;

> If Heav'n would make us ſuch another world
> Of one entire and perfect chryſolite,—

where all ſhould be pure, and perfect, and without a flaw.—But if we are, in ſpite of ourſelves, compelled to belong to the world in which we are placed, I know not whether it be not more manly, more ſtateſman-like, and more virtuous too, to make the beſt of it;—to do what we can with the materials which we have; and to endeavour to work out our own happineſs,—even though We ſhould not be able to ſeparate and diſconnect it from the happineſs of our fellow-creatures.

I think this a more rational conduct, than the ſort of *National Seceſſion* which the Honourable Gentleman's Motion goes to recommend. I know of no juſtifiable reaſon for ſuch a *Seceſſion*,—I can conceive no motive for it, conſiſtent with true ſenſe of right, and juſt dignity of character. I know not how we could reconcile it to ourſelves (if it were practicable) to withdraw into gloomy ſolitude, and "grim repoſe;" while we have talents which God has given us for the benefit of our fellow-creatures, and while we have a ſtation which affords us an opportunity of employing thoſe talents to that purpoſe. It is not under ſuch circumſtances that I can conceive it to be excuſeable, to indulge a whim, and fretfulneſs, and peeviſhneſs of temper, from perſonal ſpleen and petty reſentment, becauſe every thing does not go exactly as we would have it. I can conceive no cauſe, except ſullen diſcontent, and diſappointed ambition, which could lead us to abjure communion with mankind.

For diſcontent, as a Nation, God be thanked, We have no ground! Ours has been a generous ambition,—and it has not been diſappointed. It has not been diſappointed ſo far as we are ourſelves concerned; but it looks to larger and more elevated objects,—to the peace and proſperity of the world.

If,

If, indeed, the full gratification of ambitious views were a ſufficient reaſon for retirement; we might fairly and proudly retire, and ſay, with truth and confidence, that we have acted our part. If we had undertaken the War for territorial aggrandizement,—if we had been impelled to it by a thirſt of naval glory,—we might indeed ſit down contented with our Conqueſts, when there is ſcarcely any thing left for us to acquire; we might pauſe, ſatiated with victory, when we have no longer an Enemy to ſubdue.—But we did not undertake the War for theſe objects. Undertake it, indeed, we did in no ſenſe. It was forced upon us by the aggreſſion and ambition of our Enemy. We were compelled to engage in it for our ſafety and defence,—not in local, partial, and inſulated points; but in thoſe points in which our ſafety is connected and bound up with the ſafety, honour, and intereſts of Europe.

'But what,' ſay the Gentlemen on the other ſide of the Houſe, 'is the diſtinct *Object* for which we are engaged?'—Gentlemen put this queſtion,—as if an *Object* were a corporeal ſubſtance, as if it were ſomething tangible, ſomething that could be taken in the hand and laid upon your table, and turned round and round before them for accurate, ocular, examination. In this ſenſe, I profeſs myſelf perfectly unable to ſatisfy them

them. But do they mean ſomething leſs preciſe than this, (though ſcarcely leſs ſo)—the ſtatement of ſome one diſtinct term, the obtaining of which is to be ſettled before-hand as a *ſine quâ non* condition of peace? If they do mean this, are they really prepared to argue that ſuch a ſtatement, ſuppoſing it could be made, would be politic, would be prudent,—particularly with a view to the facilitating or accelerating a pacification? Do they not believe,—is it not evident,—that if it had any effect, it would have an effect exactly the contrary? Do they think that the Reſolution of 1707, for inſtance, to which I have already referred, had a tendency to promote or to retard Peace? That Reſolution, indeed, we know was not adhered to. Was it then politic to have paſſed it? Or, would the Gentlemen be contented with the ſtatement of an *Object* to which we did *not* mean to adhere? Would they gain anything by *this?* Would *this* give facility to Peace, or vigour to War? Would it contribute to any poſſible purpoſe that could be in any way beneficial to the Country?

That we *have* objects, great and momentous objects, in our view, there is no man that muſt not feel. I can have no difficulty in declaring that the moſt complete and deſirable termination of the conteſt would be the *Deliverance of Europe.*

I am told, indeed, that there are perſons who affect not to underſtand this phraſe; who think there is ſomething confuſed, ſomething involved, ſomething of ſtudied ambiguity and concealment in it. I cannot undertake to anſwer for other Gentlemen's powers of comprehenſion. The Map of Europe is before them.—I can only ſay, that I do not admire that man's intellects, and I do not envy that man's feelings, who can look over that map without gathering ſome notion of what is meant by the *Deliverance of Europe.*

I do not envy that man's feelings, who can behold the ſufferings of Switzerland, and who derives from that ſight no idea of what is meant by the *Deliverance of Europe.*—I do not envy the feelings of that man, who can look without emotion at Italy,—plundered, inſulted, trampled upon, exhauſted, covered with ridicule, and horror, and devaſtation;—who can look at all this, and be at a loſs to gueſs what is meant by the *Deliverance of Europe.* As little do I envy the feelings of that man, who can view the People of the Netherlands driven into inſurrection, and ſtruggling for their freedom againſt the heavy hand of a mercileſs tyranny, without entertaining any ſuſpicion of what may be the ſenſe of the word *Deliverance.*—Does ſuch a man contemplate Holland groaning under arbitrary oppreſſions and exactions?—Does he turn his eyes to Spain trembling at the

nod

nod of a foreign maſter?—And does the word *Deliverance* ſtill ſound unintelligibly in his ear?—Has he heard of the reſcue and ſalvation of Naples by the appearance and the triumphs of the Britiſh Fleet?—Does he know that the Monarchy of Naples maintains its exiſtence at the ſword's point?—And is his underſtanding, and is his heart, ſtill impenetrable to the ſenſe and meaning, of the *Deliverance of Europe*?

Sir, that we ſhall ſucceed in effecting this general *Deliverance*, I do not pretend to affirm. That in no poſſible caſe we ſhould lay down our arms and conclude a Peace before it is fully effected, I do not mean to argue. But that this is the *Object* which we ought to have in view, even if we look to our own ſafety only,—that of this we ought to accompliſh as much, as our means, our power, our exertions, our opportunities will allow,—I do moſt anxiouſly contend. If circumſtances ſhould unhappily ariſe to make the attainment of the object hopeleſs, it will be time enough when they do ariſe, to give up the hopes of attaining it:—but do not let us run before misfortune, do not let us preſume diſappointment, and anticipate the neceſſity of diſgrace!

But it is contended, and juſtly contended, that the *Deliverance of Europe* cannot be effected by

our

our exertions alone: and that, unleſs other Powers are ſincerely diſpoſed to co-operate, We are ſetting out on a romantic and abſurd and impracticable enterprize, which we have neither any chance of accompliſhing, nor any duty or call to undertake. I perfectly agree, that if other Powers are not diſpoſed to co-operate, we have no reaſonable chance of ſucceeding to the extent of our wiſhes. But I cannot help aſking, at the ſame time—If there be no ſuch diſpoſition on the part of other Powers, where is the uſe or what is th neceſſity for the Honourable Gentleman's mo tion? Why need Parliament interfere to prevent His Majeſty's Miniſters from taking advantage of diſpoſitions which do not exiſt, and from accepting co-operation which will not be offered?—But if, on the other hand, the Powers of Europe, or any of them, are ready to do their part towards the common ſalvation, and want but our countenance and encouragement to begin; if the train is laid,—if the ſparks of enmity and reſentment which the aggreſſions of France have kindled in every Nation throughout Europe want but our breath to blow them into conflagration;—is it the dictate of our duty, our intereſt, or our feelings, to ſave France from deſtruction,—and by a coarſe and haſty proceeding, like that which is now recommended to us, *to throw a wet blanket* on the flames?

If, however, the co-operation of Allies ſhould be offered, we are called upon to receive them with ſuſpicion and diſtruſt; and to be aſſured, from the fate of former Confederacies, from the manner in which we have been duped and deceived heretofore, that no fidelity to engagements, and no conſiſtency of conduct, is to be expected from the Continental Powers.

It ſeems to me that this is rather a hard, unfair, and haſty judgement. When it is contended, that becauſe Auſtria and Pruſſia have been unfaithful to our alliance, and have made peace at different times in a manner equally inconſiſtent with their engagements and their intereſts,—Ruſſia and the Porte muſt therefore be conſidered as equally faithleſs, equally worthleſs Allies, as Powers on whom no reliance can be placed, and from whoſe exertions no advantage can be expected; — when the errors of the guilty are thus made to furniſh a ground of preſumption againſt the innocent: — I have too much reſpect for the Honourable Gentleman, to ſay that he reaſons falſely, or feebly;—but I muſt ſay, that if I had ever happened to meet with ſuch a train of reaſoning, upon any other ſubject, in any other place, I ſhould have had little heſitation in condemning it as illogical and inconcluſive.

Of

Of the treatment, indeed, which the Ottoman Porte receives, I think we have ſome reaſon to complain. Gentlemen ſeem to think that when they have quoted the words of His Majeſty's Speech, "the vigour and deciſion of the Ottoman Porte," they have entirely ſettled the queſtion;—that they have ſtated ſomething obviouſly and palpably abſurd and ridiculous:—and the ſmile with which this quotation is received by thoſe who ſurround them, muſt very much encourage them in that idea. They ſeem to think, that becauſe the Grand Seignior wears a long beard and a long gown, and is altogether a figure ſuch as we are not accuſtomed every day to contemplate,—to expect vigour and deciſion, or good ſenſe or ſound policy, from him, is an expectation in the higheſt degree wild and fantaſtical.

I cannot, for my life, bring myſelf to underſtand where all this ridicule lies. I know not why the Grand Seignior ſhould not take as correct a view of his intereſts, as any other Power whoſe cuſtoms may be more conformable to our own. I am ſure that the Declaration (which we have all ſeen) of the motives which have guided the conduct of the Porte, is as able and maſterly a compoſition, as correct in principles of juſtice, and as ſound in principles of policy, as any

State Paper that was ever publiſhed by any Cabinet of Europe. And if the dreſs and decorations of the Turk be all that ſtrikes the Honourable Gentleman as ridiculous;—I know not why I ſhould forbear to take the benefit that might reſult to my arguments, from calling your attention to the antic mummeries and tri-coloured trumpery of the enlightened Executive Directory of France. But I know, if I were to do ſo, Sir, I ſhould be cenſured as illiberal, unphiloſophical, and—(there is another word in faſhion which I had almoſt forgotten) *uncandid*. Allow me, Sir, only to claim the ſame candour and liberality for the Turk.

But your Turk is a Mahometan, it ſeems, and therefore an Ally not fit for a Chriſtian!—I do not know, Sir, but an Alliance with a Mahometan may be as good as a Peace with an Atheiſt; the ſanction of its engagements may perhaps be as ſacred, and its ſtipulations as likely to be fulfilled.

But he is a ſluggiſh Turk; ſlow to anger, and hard to be driven into action. If that be his character, what muſt be the provocations which have rouſed him!

But then comes the worſt of all:—the Turks and Ruſſians are naturally enemies; and yet, here we

we find them moſt unnaturally allied together againſt a common Enemy. In the firſt place, Sir, it is a little hard, that, when *in favour* of France, all notions of received and eſtabliſhed policy, and of the balance of power in Europe, are to be utterly diſregarded and put out of the queſtion,—there is yet to be no combination *againſt* France but upon principles ſtrictly conformable to them. But after all, what is there in this argument? What does it prove,—but that the aggreſſions of France have been ſo multiplied, ſo various, and ſo extraordinary, as to unite againſt her Powers the moſt oppoſite in nature and in intereſt, — as to make the neceſſity of reſiſtance, and the duty of ſelf-preſervation ſuperſede every narrower conſideration, every motive of more particular and contracted policy?

Did Gentlemen ſuppoſe then that there is ſuch a magic force in the hoſtility of France, that if ſhe attacks, at the ſame time, two Powers, naturally enemies to each other, the recollection of their previous hoſtility ſhall deprive each of them of the capacity of ſelf-defence? Did any body ever ſee, or hear, or read of an inſtance of ſuch rooted, and unconquerable, and unreaſonable, antipathy? Can they conceive this in individual inſtances? If a man comes againſt me with a ſword ſtained with

with the blood of my enemy, am I therefore to make no reſiſtance to his attack?

For our *old* Allies, however, it is taken for granted that no apology can be made. No good reaſon (it is contended) can be given, why *they* ſhould now be more worthy of our confidence, more ſteady to our intereſts and their own, than they have proved themſelves in the former Confederacy. The Honourable Gentleman has anticipated an argument which he is apprehenſive may be drawn from the change of circumſtances in Europe, and from the conviction which is grown up within this laſt year, reſpecting the real views and intentions of France. This argument the Honourable Gentleman has anticipated, and declares he ſees nothing in it. The Honourable Gentleman is right in his anticipation. I certainly am diſpoſed to uſe this argument; and I certainly am equally diſpoſed to differ from the Honourable Gentleman, as to its force and validity.

I would aſk the Honourable Gentleman, I would aſk every man in the Houſe, whether he does not know—perſonally and intimately know—many individuals in this Country, the whole courſe and current of whoſe ideas with reſpect to France have of late been entirely changed?

Does

Does he not believe that the invaſion of Switzerland, for inſtance, that the profligate, ſwindling tranſaction with America, that the event of the Negotiation at Liſle, worked a great change in the public mind in this Country? Is not the Honourable Gentleman acquainted with great, and illuſtrious Converts among what ſome perſons have deemed the moſt able, the moſt enlightened, and moſt reſpectable characters of the age? And by what rule either of juſtice or of reaſon, does the Honourable Gentleman propoſe to limit the benefits of experience to his own countrymen alone?

Is it not poſſible that the Stateſmen of Auſtria or of Pruſſia may have caught ſome light from what has paſſed upon the Continent of Europe? May not Baron Thugut or Count Haugwitz have declared, (though not perhaps in a *public tavern*) at Berlin or Vienna, that "*France has thrown off the maſk, if ever ſhe wore it?*" Would not *they* be to be believed if they had made ſuch a declaration? Is there any thing that ſhould make *their* profeſſion incredible, and *their* conviction ſuſpicious? Or is it to the enlightened wiſdom, to the penetrating and perſpicacious ſagacity, to the firm and inflexible virtue of our own patriot Stateſmen alone, that we would confine the plea of credulity, and reſtrict the privilege of recantation?

I, Sir,

I, Sir, do not ſee the juſtice of ſuch a reſtriction and limitation: and I confeſs I ſhould try the ſincerity of ſuch a recantation by one teſt alone;——by obſerving whether or no it were followed by any *act* that correſponded with its ſpirit and its meaning.

It has been obſerved by antient philoſophers, that if virtue could be brought to perfection and conſummation in any human mind, the poſſeſſor of it would ſtill be an imperfect creature, foraſmuch as the conſciouſneſs of his own excellence would weaken in him one of the firſt and moſt amiable qualities of human nature——the indulgence for the frailties of his fellow-creatures.—It is, I ſuppoſe, from ſome ſuch cauſe as this, that the Gentlemen on the other ſide of the Houſe ſhew themſelves ſo little indulgent to the failings and errors of our Allies. Conſcious that nothing of French artifice, or French wickedneſs, could deceive or impoſe upon *them*, they cannot forgive the folly and ſtupidity of thoſe who have ſuffered themſelves for a moment to be ſo deluded: nay, they are hardly content to aſcribe the deluſion to folly; but are forward to inſinuate a ſuſpicion of ſympathy and fellow-feeling with France.

We,

We, Sir, who have not the ſame conſciouſneſs of infallibility in ourſelves, are naturally averſe from ſuch ſuſpicion, and more diſpoſed to make good-natured allowances. And I proteſt, for one, that if the miniſters whom I have mentioned, Baron Thugut, and Count Haugwitz,—nay, if even their maſters, the Emperor and the King of Pruſſia, had pledged themſelves yet deeper to a miſtaken opinion of France;—if the forms of the Houſe had admitted of their being brought to your bar, and there, Sir, before God and the Country, ſwearing *upon their oaths and upon their honour*, that they believed—nay, ſwearing that they *always would continue* to believe,—that the Government of France was the *gentleſt, quieteſt, pureſt, nobleſt, faithfulleſt, beſt* of Governments;—that It *abhorred and deteſted above all things, the idea of foreign interference* with the government of other Countries;—that the character of the Directory had ſomething in it of *peculiar candour, ingenuity, and openneſs*;—that they (the witneſſes) ſpoke to theſe facts from their own certain knowledge,—for that they had *lived upon terms of the moſt confidential intercourſe* with the Directory, and *their communication had been almoſt entirely upon ſubjects of a political nature*:—If, I ſay, Sir, ſuch had been the teſtimony in favour of France, given with all the ſolemnity of an oath, by the great perſonages to whom I have referred;—I ſhould yet be willing to allow ſome credit to their aſ-

ſeveration, if they were now to come forward and tell us, that the circumſtances of the conduct of France ſince the time when this teſtimony was given,—that, above all, the *declarations and confeſſion of France herſelf*, had completely changed their opinion; had detected the fraud which had been practiſed upon their judgment, and had convinced them of the profligacy, the atrocity, and the hypocriſy of the Directory.

I ſay, Sir, I ſhould be willing to give full credit to this penitent retractation. I ſhould be willing even to profit by their offers of future co-operation againſt France. Nor do I well ſee on what ground the Honourable Gentlemen could reject ſuch offers, unleſs they are prepared to argue (which if they are, on their own judgments be the reſponſibility,—I do not preſume to give any opinion for or againſt ſuch a propoſition) that 'no man 'who has once been contaminated by the commu-'nion of French principles,—who has been drawn, 'however innocently or miſtakenly, into an appro-'bation and encouragement of perſons acting upon 'theſe principles,—can ever again be a ſound man.'

I, for my part, ſhould in ſuch a caſe incline to believe the recantation ſincere, and to act upon it as ſuch;—unleſs indeed at the moment of making it the ſame perſon were to ſay to me, "I do

"nto

" not, however, ſo much diſapprove French prin-
" ciples in themſelves: *I only doubt the propriety*
" *of their application.*"—Then, indeed, I admit, that I ſhould diſtruſt him again as much as ever.

So much, Sir, as to the particular argument that the paſt conduct of our former Allies ought to lead us to withhold all credit from their future profeſſions. There is, however, another and a more general argument, comprehending alike theſe and the other Powers of Europe; which, but that it has been ſtated by the Honourable Gentleman, I ſhould really have thought ſcarcely worth confutation. We, it ſeems—a wiſe, prudent, reflecting People—are much ſtruck with all the outrages that France has committed upon the Continent; but on the Powers of the Continent itſelf, no laſting impreſſion has been made. Is this probable? Is it poſſible? Is it in the nature of things, that the *contemplation* of the wrongs and miſeries which others have endured, ſhould have worked a deeper impreſſion upon our minds, than the *ſuffering* of thoſe miſeries and wrongs has left on the minds of thoſe upon whom they were actually inflicted?

Segnius irritant animos demiſſa per aures
Quam quæ ſunt oculis ſubjecta fidelibus.—

Yet the echo and report of the blows by which other Countries have fallen, are ſuppoſed to have had

had more effect upon us, than the blows themſelves produced upon the miſerable victims who ſunk beneath them.

The pillage and bloody devaſtation of Italy ſtrike *us* with horror;—but Italy, we are to believe, is contented with what has befallen her.—The inſults which are hurled by the French garriſon from the walls of the citadel of Turin rouſe reſentment in *our* breaſts;—but have no effect on the feelings of the Piedmonteſe.—*We* read with indignation of the flag of Bernadotte diſplayed in mockery and inſult to the Emperor and his ſubjects;—but it flaunted in the eyes of the people of Vienna without exciting any emotions of hatred or reſentment.—The invaſion of a province of a friendly Power with whom they had no cauſe nor pretext for hoſtility, has created in *us* a decided deteſtation for the unprincipled hypocriſy and ambition of the Directory;—but the Ottoman Porte ſits down contented with the loſs of Egypt; feels no injury, and deſires neither reparation nor revenge.

And then, Sir, the wrongs of Switzerland!—They too are calculated to excite an intereſt *here*;—but the Swiſs no doubt endure them with quiet reſignation, and contented humility. If, after the taking of Soleure, the venerable Magiſtrates of that place were firſt paraded round the

town

town in barbarous triumph, and afterwards, contrary to all the laws of war, of nations, and of nature, were inhumanly put to death;—if, when the unoffending town of Sion capitulated to the French, the troops were let loose to revel in every ſpecies of licentiouſneſs and cruelty,—if the women, after having been brutally violated, were thrown alive into the flames;—if, more recently, when Stantz was carried after a ſhort but vigorous and honourable reſiſtance, ſuch as would have conciliated the eſteem of any but a French conqueror,—the whole town was burnt to the ground, and the aſhes quenched with the blood of the inhabitants:—the bare recital of theſe horrors and atrocities awakens in Britiſh boſoms—I truſt it *does* awaken, I truſt it will long keep alive,—an abhorrence of the nation and name of that People by whom ſuch execrable cruelties have been practiſed, and ſuch terrible calamities inflicted:—but on the Swiſs (we are to underſtand) theſe cruelties and calamities have left no laſting impreſſion;—the inhabitants of Soleure who followed, with tears of anguiſh and indignation, their venerated magiſtrates to a death of terror and ignominy,—the huſbands and fathers and ſons of thoſe wretched victims who expired in torture and in ſhame, beneath the brutality of a ſavage ſoldiery at Sion,—the wretched ſurvivors of thoſe who periſhed in the ruins of their Country

at

at Stantz—*they* all felt but a tranſient pang,—*their* tears by this time are dried,—*their* rage is huſhed,—*their* reſentment ſilenced;—there is nothing in *their* feelings which can be ſtimulated into honourable and effectual action;—there is no motive for *their* exertions, upon which we can ſafely and permanently rely!—Sir, I ſhould be aſhamed to waſte your time by arguing ſuch a queſtion.

If, however, with ſuch Allies as there is a probability of obtaining,—with ſuch a chance for the fidelity and ſtability of thoſe alliances as the circumſtances to which I have alluded appear to furniſh,—we are yet to be told that there is no ſafety in ſuch a ſyſtem: it may be worth while to conſider very ſhortly, whether a greater degree of ſecurity would belong to a *ſeparate treaty of Peace* with France concluded at the preſent moment,—if at the preſent moment it were poſſible to conclude it. I certainly have no thoughts of troubling you at length upon this part of the ſubject, becauſe there is not one word in the Honourable Gentleman's ſpeech which implies the belief (it would indeed be ſtrange if he could believe) that any Peace on any terms is at preſent within our power. But if the faith of other Powers be doubtful,—the perfidy of France is certain.

Need

Need I enumerate the ſeveral inſtances of direct and profligate breach of faith which have diſtinguiſhed,—or rather which have marked in almoſt equal degree,—every diplomatic act of the French Republic? Need I recall to your memory how the preliminaries of Leoben (firſt granted to the Emperor to extricate Buonaparte from the difficulties of the ſituation into which his raſhneſs had precipitated him), were withdrawn and cancelled by the French Government, under the pretence that to claim the execution of them was to impoſe on the generoſity of the Republic?—how in their room was ſubſtituted the treaty of Campo Formio?—and how the treaty of Campo Formio, after being violated in innumerable inſtances, has been almoſt diſtinctly abrogated and renounced in the conferences at Radſtadt? Need I deſire you to recollect the fraud and violence by which the French took poſſeſſion of Venice, and the ſhameleſs injuſtice with which they the next day transferred that poſſeſſion to the Emperor? Need I return again to Switzerland to remind you, that the invaſion of that devoted country was the work not of arms ſo much as of treaty; that the way for pillage and devaſtation was opened by the pretext of ſuperintending and guaranteeing a few *Parliamentary Reforms?* Can we remember theſe things, and yet pretend to doubt if we ſhall have as good ſecurity for the fidelity of our Allies in the proſecution of the con-

teſt, as we could build on the faith of France for its ſafe and honourable termination?

There is yet another point of view in which this argument may be conſidered. Let us compare the expectations which we may be allowed to form of *our* Allies, with the character and ſituation of the ſeveral Allies of France. If we, in renewing the great Confederacy of the Powers of the Continent, are weaving a rope of ſand;—let us examine whether the connections of France are bound to her by a chain which nothing can looſen. If the ground upon which we ſtand is falſe and hollow; let us ſee whether the alliances of France reſt upon a more ſtable and ſolid foundation.

If the only ſure foundation of permanent alliance between Nations muſt be laid in community of intereſt and of ſentiment, in the ſenſe of mutual benefits, or in the interchange of protection on the one ſide, and attachment on the other:—let us look round, Sir, among the States which are immediately connected with France; let us examine the benefits which they derive from her friendſhip; and it will not be difficult to eſtimate the affection which they muſt owe to her in return.

Is it in the Ciſalpine, the Roman, the Ligurian Republics, thoſe deformed and ricketty children, upon

upon whom the Mother Republic has laviſhed ſo much of her care,—is it in theſe, however they may bear the precious reſemblance of their parent, that we are to look for the fondneſs of filial duty and attachment?

Are we to look for it in the Ciſalpine Republic, whom, in preference to the others, ſhe appears to have ſelected as a living ſubject for her experiments in political anatomy; whom ſhe has delivered up tied and bound to a ſeries of butchering bungling philoſophical profeſſors, to diſtort and mangle, and lop, and ſtretch its limbs into all ſorts of fantaſtical ſhapes, and to hunt through its palpitating frame the vital principle of republicaniſm?

Is the infant Roman Republic ſo gratified by the preſent which France has made to it of five Conſuls inſtead of two;—as to forget all the miſeries, the robbery, the confiſcation, and the blood, by which this invaluable acquiſition has been purchaſed?

Does the protection which ſhe has afforded to the Ligurian Republic, entitle her to their affectionate acknowledgement and pious devotion? Obſerve, I beg of you, in what a ſituation thoſe unfortunate Ligurians have been placed by her. They are forced into acts of outrage and hoſtility againſt England;—We declare war againſt them;—and ſuch is their confidence in the protection of France,

that no ſooner has that war been declared, than they come crawling upon their knees to implore our pity and forbearance.—Unnatural Ligurians! if they are not thankful for ſuch ſuch an inſtance of the parental ſolicitude of France for their welfare!

Look next at that unfortunate Prince, whoſe dominions border upon theſe wretched Republics; and aſk,—by what ties of gratitude is the King of Sardinia bound to his ally? The King of Sardinia, it is true, has not yet been precipitated from his throne;—but he ſits there with he ſword of a French garriſon ſuſpended above his head. He retains, indeed, the ſtyle and title of king;—but there is a French general to be vice-roy over him. A priſoner in his own capital,—ſurrounded by the ſpies and agents, and hemmed in by the arms, of the Directory,—compelled to diſmiſs from his councils and his preſence all thoſe of his ſervants who were moſt attached to his perſon, and moſt zealous for his intereſts,—compelled to preach daily to his people, the mortifying and degrading leſſon of that patience and humility, of which he is himſelf a melancholy example,—to excuſe and extenuate the inſults offered by his allies to his ſubjects,—to repreſs, even by force, the reſentment of his ſubjects againſt his allies;—is this a ſituation in which the King of Sardinia can be ſuppoſed to derive comfort from the alliance of France, and repay it with thankfulneſs?

fulneſs? Would he not,—even if this were to be the extent of his ſuffering and degradation,—would he not,—if he inherits the ſpirit of his great anceſtors, if their blood flows in his veins,—would he not ſeize, even at the riſk of his crown and of his life, any opportunity that might be afforded him, to emancipate himſelf from a connection ſo burthenſome, to ſhake off the weight of a friendſhip ſo intolerable?

But he well knows that he has not yet ſuffered all that is prepared for him. He knows full well that he is allowed to occupy even this ſhadowy and tottering throne, to graſp the "unreal mockery" of a ſceptre, only ſo long as he ſhall be neceſſary as Purveyor for the French army in Italy;—or until it ſhall pleaſe the capricious cruelty of his tyrants to end his diſgrace by annihilation.—Perhaps the ſupplies for a campaign may be more readily procured by the operations of a regular government, than they could be by any new upſtart revolutionary power, in a country agitated by the ferment of political change. Perhaps the luſt of deſtroying may overbear this prudential conſideration. But at all events — the war in Italy once over — whether it be in the tide of victory, or in the ebb and reflux of defeat, — that the French armies return through Piedmont, their paſſage will alike be fatal to this unhappy Monarch and to his people;—they will equally ſweep away with them, in a torrent, whatever remains of royalty

and of eſtabliſhed government; and will leave behind them the ſame wreck, the ſame ſhapeleſs ruins, with which the fair face of the neighbouring countries is already encumbered and deformed.

But perhaps, with other more powerful and more reſpected allies,—with thoſe whoſe names were brought forward with ſuch diſplay and oſtentation in the Negotiation at Liſle, as inſeparably connected with the honour and intereſts of the French Republic, — perhaps with Holland and with Spain a greater degree of forbearance has been obſerved; a more friendly and liberal intercourſe has been eſtabliſhed; a more honourable and independent ſyſtem of communication has been maintained.—

The friendſhip of Holland!—the independence of Spain!—Is there a man ſo beſotted as to ſuppoſe, that there is one hour of peace with France preſerved by either of theſe unhappy Countries, that there is one ſyllable of friendſhip uttered by them towards France,—but what is extorted by the immediate preſſure or by the dread and terror of French arms? —

——— " mouth-honour, breath
" Which the poor heart would fain refuſe, but dare not!"

Have the regenerated Republic of Holland, or the degraded Monarchy of Spain, ſuch reaſon to rejoice in the protection of the French Republic,

that they would voluntarily throw themſelves between her and any blow which might menace her exiſtence?

Holland once had wealth, had induſtry, had commerce. Where are they now? Gone; ſwallowed up in the all-devouring gulph of French bankruptcy. Holland once had flouriſhing colonies; them, perhaps, France has preſerved for her:—The flag of the enemies of France is flying in Ceylon, and at the Cape of Good Hope.—Holland had once a navy—a navy of ſtrength and gallantry and reputation, a navy which has often contended even with our own, and contended with no mean exertion, for the maſtery of the ſea:—Where is it now? where is the ſkill which directed, the promptneſs, courage, and vigour, which manned it?—all utterly deſtroyed and gone. The baneful touch of French fraternity has blaſted the reputation, has unmanned the ſtrength, has bowed the ſpirit, of the people,—in the ſame proportion as it has exhauſted the reſources of the country. The ſpirit of the people is bowed, it is true;—but let us truſt that it is not broken; let us hope that, if an opening ſhould be preſented, it may yet ſpring up with ſudden and irreſiſtable violence to the aſtoniſhment and overthrow of its oppreſſors!

Spain, however, it may be ſaid, is ſtill powerful, and ſtill a Monarchy; to Spain, therefore, the friend-

ſhip

ſhip of France muſt have been offered on more equal and durable terms. An alliance with a Bourbon cemented with Bourbon blood cannot but be laſting.—I look at Spain, Sir, and it muſt be owned I find her ſtill a Monarchy: ſhe has not yet received the bleſſings of a Directory and two Councils. But, I confeſs, I perceive no one of thoſe features by which the Monarchy of Spain has heretofore been diſtinguiſhed. I ſee nothing of power; I can diſcover nothing of policy. I know, that to be engaged in an impolitic war, is not of itſelf an unheard-of, or an unaccountable novelty. Spain has, no doubt, been often engaged (as well as other Powers) in wars of pride, in wars of ambition, in wars of doubtful or miſtaken intereſt. In an abſolute monarchy too, like Spain, it muſt often have happened, that, in matters of war, or alliance, as well as of internal regulation and domeſtic policy, the will of the Prince, guided either by ſhallow favouritiſm, or by crooked intrigue, has, at times, adopted meaſures prejudicial to the welfare of his ſubjects. A powerful and haughty nobility, a numerous and highly-privileged clergy, may at other times have given an impulſe to the direction of affairs agreeable only to their own prejudices and partial intereſts. At other times, again, the tempeſt of popular fury has overborne both the will of the Prince and the power of the ariſtocracy, and driven the machine of government wholly out of its natural courſe and direction.

direction. But a ſituation of things, in which the crown is enthralled,—the ariſtocracy humbled,—and the nation in general degraded and impoveriſhed,—not by the effects of internal ſtruggle, or the perverſe preponderance of any one party or member of the ſtate, but by the palpable, undiſguiſed, and oppreſſive agency of a foreign power:—this is, indeed, an unuſual ſituation for an independent kingdom. Such is, however, the ſituation of Spain. The power of the monarch,—the prejudices and privileges of the higher orders,—the comfort, happineſs, and almoſt ſubſiſtence of the maſs of the people,—are all embarked together in a war, of which the ſucceſs or the failure muſt be equally fatal to them all:—a war, which has committed that Country with an enemy whom it dares not face, and has linked it to the fortunes, and ſubjected it to the will of an ally, whoſe friendſhip is more formidable than hoſtility:—a war which has brought into contempt the authority of the government, and the character of the nation;—which has exhauſted their commercial and annihilated their military marine:—which, in precluding their intercourſe with their colonies, has cut off the ſprings of wealth that fed the ſtate, and the ſtreams of commerce that enriched the country:—a war, which has done more in two ſhort years, under the auſpices of France, to carry into execution that Vote of the Britiſh Parliament in 1707,—to wreſt the Monarchy

narchy of Spain and the Spaniſh Weſt Indies from the poſſeſſion of the Houſe of Bourbon,—than all the exertions of this Country could ever have effected, and than all its enmity could ever have deſired.

So fatal has been to Spain already the friendſhip of the French Republic;—and ſuch are the obligations by which ſhe is bound to it in perpetual allegiance and fidelity! But this is not yet all:—the King of Spain has yet to drink the bitter dregs of miſery and degradation.

Sir, when Louis XIV. broke up the conferences of Gertruydenberg, rather than ſubmit to the propoſal of turning his arms againſt his Grandſon;—whatever our diſlike of his former inſolence, or our deteſtation of his ambition may be, we cannot refuſe our approbation to this juſt diſplay of ſpirit and of feeling. Fallen as he then was from the ſplendour of his high fortunes, and in ſome meaſure at the mercy of his enemies; we cannot but applaud the honourable pride with which, while conceding territory and dominion as the price of peace, he yet rejected peace itſelf, when it was to be purchaſed with ignominy. I think too, we cannot but condemn the cruel and ungenerous policy which dictated the demand of ſuch a ſacrifice. But this, we are to recollect, was the demand of a triumphant enemy. Mark now the

extortion

extortion of a protecting friend! The King of Spain, exhauſted in his reſources, and diſgraced in his arms, by a war carried on at the inſtigation and for the excluſive intereſt of the French Directory, is, in return for theſe exertions, commanded by that Directory to employ what remains of the ſtrength and power of his kingdom, for the conqueſt of Portugal, for the ſubverſion of the throne to which his Daughter is heir. Have we the feelings of men, and do we doubt what ſentiments of indignation and diſguſt this outrageous command muſt have excited in the boſom of a Father and a King?

Now, Sir, there is a ſtory, and it was a good one till the French got hold of it—the ſtory of *William Tell*. I think I need hardly make the application. Would it appear to us a ſurprizing or an unnatural thing, if the King of Spain, urged and finally compelled to point his laſt weapon at the Crown of his Daughter, ſhould turn round in the fury of deſpair, and aim it at the boſom of the tyrant who dictated the blow?

I have not troubled the Houſe with this enumeration, as conceiving it to hold out in itſelf inducements and temptations for the continuance of the war;—ſuppoſing that we had any choice as to continuing or concluding it. But forced as we

are to perſevere in the conteſt,—and expedient a it appears, that we ſhould furniſh ourſelves with whatever means we can procure for conducting it to a termination conſiſtent with our ſafety and our honor,—and convinced, as I think every man muſt be, that the co-operation of other Powers affords at leaſt one great inſtrument for ſuch an exertion ;—it does, I think, ſeem material,—when againſt the ſyſtem of alliances no argument is ſo loudly urged as the probability of thoſe alliances proving unfaithful and unſound,—it does, I think, ſeem material to aſcertain, whether this hazard is peculiar to *our* ſituation alone ; or whether, if on the one hand we have but feeble aſſiſtance, we are likely, on the other hand, to have any thing but feebleneſs to oppoſe. Committed with our Enemy ſingle-handed,—France to England—what ſhould we fear? But if the acceſſion of allies is to *us* an acceſſion of weakneſs, is it not ſomething to be aſſured that to France it is not an acceſſion of permanent and formidable ſtrength?—that if France has the means of ſeducing *our Allies*, we have the ſatisfaction of feeling that *our* intereſt cannot be indifferent to the *Allies of France?*—that even when marſhalled on her ſide and fighting under her banners, they cannot fail in their ſecret hearts to pray that the victory may be on our ſide?

Is

Is not this the caſe? Do we not know it to be ſo? Who is there, that has not heard, and heard with heartfelt delight, that the glorious victory of the firſt of Auguſt communicated a ſenſation of triumph and of joy, not only to the heart of England,—not only to the boſom of thoſe Nations whoſe deliverance it more immediately effected,—not only to Nations, neutral in name, but who feel in ſpite of their neutrality that their independant exiſtence is involved in the iſſue of the conteſt,—but even to Nations nominally hoſtile to Great Britain,—to Governments the ſlaves of the power or creatures of the caprice of France?—The preſence of a French Ambaſſador could ſcarce repreſs the burſt of exultation in Courts that trembled at his frown. The whiſpered ſatisfaction went round in circles where an open manifeſtation of joy would have been treaſon. And even the vaſſal Republics leaped in their chains.

Oh—but however willing the allies of France might be to ſeize a favourable opportunity for ſhaking off the yoke of her protection,—were we even able to rally them on our ſide in the outſet of the conteſt, their aſſiſtance would be nothing worth. Exhauſted and diſpirited as they are, they have neither the heart nor ſtrength to fight the battle of independence!—True, Sir, they have been cruelly reduced and broken down. It is

true, that many of them have been moulded and diſtorted into ſhapes ſo ſtrange and unnatural, that they ſcarce have limbs to uſe, or the power of ſelf-motion remaining; but yet, even ſo, they are not wholly without vigour and vitality,—

Spoliatis arma ſuperſunt.

The arms which they have remaining are the arms moſt terrible to tyrants,—their wrongs, their deſperation, the deſire of revenge. Let France appeal to the bad paſſions of *Our Allies*; let her cajole their fears, or inflame their appetite for aggrandiſement. The foundations of *our* tacit but intimate alliance with the *Allies of France* are already laid, in their juſt reſentment, in their proud indignation, in every virtuous and every honourable feeling. When did ſuch a conteſt terminate in giving ultimate and permanent preponderance to evil?—If I do not venture to anticipate a fortunate reſult amounting to the full completion of our ſanguine and juſtifiable expectations, I may ſurely aſk,—what has France done, to deſerve that the ordinary courſe of human events ſhould be reverſed in her favour?

But then, Sir, another and a graver doubt is ſtated. It is doubted whether, with half the world in arms on our ſide, the objects which we might hope to obtain would be, in any juſt and politic ſenſe, *Britiſh objects*. I, Sir, have not ſat

long

long enough in this Houſe to remember the time, — but a time I am told there was,—when if I had ventured to heſitate a doubt whether or no the ſituation of the Powers of the Continent, relatively to us or to each other, and the general balance of Europe, (as it is called) were objects of Britiſh concern,—I ſhould have been ſcouted and laughed at as a driveller and an idiot, or reviled as a preſumptuous arraigner of the wiſdom and policy of our anceſtors. I underſtand that all this is now changed. I underſtand that the great authorities, from whom I ſhould more particularly have expected ſuch a cenſure if I had ventured ſuch an opinion, have entirely thrown away and abandoned their favorite ſyſtem; and are now more ſtrenuous in decrying thoſe who maintain it, than they were before in propagating it themſelves. I cannot account for theſe excentricities; but I do not preſume to blame them. They at leaſt teach me to proceed with caution; and rather to inquire with great humility from the Honourable Gentleman on the other ſide of the Houſe, whether or no ſuch and ſuch things *are* objects of intereſt to our Country?—than to ſtate any affirmative opinion of my own upon the ſubject.

The Honourable Gentleman mentioned the Eaſt Indies, and alluded to the Expedition to Egypt as having threatened our poſſeſſions in that quarter.

quarter. Is then the deliverance of Egypt from a French army a *Britiſh object?* Does the Honourable Gentleman, or does any man, believe, that if Peace had been concluded at Liſle, this Expedition would at all the leſs have been undertaken? Does he believe that, in that caſe, to defeat the Expedition would have been equally a *Britiſh object?* And does he think that, after the Peace made at Liſle, we ſhould have been equally in a condition to defeat it? Would not the co-operation of the Turk have been then deſirable, to enable us to effect this purpoſe? Is it leſs deſirable now? If, by his co-operation, we are enabled to confound and expel that horde of robbers, and buccaneers, who have taken poſſeſſion of his Egyptian territory,—or, (what I ſhould like much better,) to ſhut them up on all ſides, and leave them there to be quietly and gradually exterminated —is *this* no advantage to Great Britain? Was the purpoſe of the Honourable Gentleman's Motion to preclude the poſſibility of *this* event?

If, by the joint aſſiſtance of Ruſſia and the Porte, we could ſweep the Levant and the Mediterranean of the ſcattered remnants of this piratical armament; if the coaſts of Italy were thus rendered unaſſailable by the Enemy, and the ſouthern coaſts of France thus laid open to our attack, and the

ports

ports and commerce of the Mediterranean and Levant ſecured to us; are *theſe Britiſh objects?*

Are the Netherlands a *Britiſh object?* I have heard that the dependence of the Netherlands on France, has in former times been conſidered as ſo prejudicial to this Country, that there was no caſe in which that object alone would not have been a ſufficient cauſe for prolonging or even for engaging in a war. I do not aſſert that this is ſo. But if there be any truth in this opinion, and if, by a vigorous co-operation on the part of Auſtria or Pruſſia, or both, we might have a chance of wreſting this poſſeſſion from France,—will the Honourable Gentleman, will any other man in the Houſe, be the perſon to get up and ſay, 'This you might effect, but I will prevent you?'

If, by the help of Pruſſia, we might hope to reſcue Holland from her preſent ſtate of ſervitude and degradation, to raiſe her head once more among the independent Powers of Europe, a rich, a flouriſhing, and a happy country, connected with us by old habits, common intereſt, and the reciprocation of commercial advantages;—will any man ſay that this would not be a *Britiſh object?*—will any man lay in his claim now, would any man be proud hereafter to have entitled himſelf, to the credit

credit of having thrown an inſuperable impediment in the way of the reſcue and reſtoration of Holland?

And yet, Sir, Holland has heretofore been thought to be ſo intimately intereſting to this Country,—eſpecially by Gentlemen who uſed to ſit on that ſide of the Houſe, and to whoſe former opinions on foreign politics I have been accuſtomed to attach no ſmall degree of reſpect and conſideration,—that, if I am rightly informed (for it is much beyond my memory in Parliament) the only act of my Right Honourable Friend's Adminiſtration which has had the good fortune to receive the approbation and applauſe of thoſe Gentlemen,—and upon which they laviſhed as large and unqualified praiſe as his warmeſt ſupporters could have afforded him,—was the ſpirited and judicious exertion by which, in the year 1787, the deſigns of France in Holland were defeated (at the riſque of a war) and the aſcendancy of this Country ſecured.

I cannot believe that if we were now debating,—if it poſſibly could be fit matter for this Houſe to debate, 'Whether or no, having an opportu-'nity to conclude a Peace in all other reſpects 'deſirable, we ſhould continue the War for the 'ſingle purpoſe of the deliverance of Holland 'alone,' I cannot believe that thoſe perſons to

whom I have referred, holding the principles which they have heretofore profeſſed, could heſitate to give their vote in the affirmative.

If I am wrong in this ſuppoſition, I deſire only to be informed, where, and when, and how, the change in the policy of the Country took place? Is the ambition of France leſs formidable now,—is her deſire of aggrandizement leſs notorious,—is her power leſs terrible,—is her hoſtility to this Country leſs acrimonious,—than when, in the year 1786, the Commercial Treaty with France was arraigned,—by the ſame perſons whoſe maxims of foreign policy I have already quoted,—not as unfavourable to Great Britain, but as likely to take off the edge of our national antipathy againſt France?—when my Right Honourable friend was attacked and reviled for having, in a paltry ſearch after mercantile profit, wholly abandoned the doctrines of our anceſtors, and improvidently thrown away the ſafety of poſterity, by admitting the poſſibility of any relations between this Country and France, except thoſe of jealous rivalry or open conteſt;—for having attempted to lull England into the belief that the ambition of France, becauſe not active at the moment, was extinguiſhed; that her power, becauſe not exerted, had ceaſed to be formidable; that her profeſſions of friendſhip could mean any

thing, but to gain time and ſtrength; that her apparent pacific diſpoſition could be any thing but a drawing of breath againſt the renewal of hoſtilities?—

If all this is changed, allow me to enquire of thoſe who can inſtruct me, by what proceſs the change has been wrought? and at what period? What is its origin and date? Did it come in with the new ſtyle? Was it on *primidi*, *duodi*, or *decadi*,—in what month, and in what year, of the new Republican Calendar? Did the old ſyſtem expire in September, and the new one begin with *Fructidor?*—I really aſk for information. I do not mean to queſtion the propriety of the alteration, but to get at the reaſon of it. I am not too old to learn. But I cannot take it upon authority alone; and that too, an authority which has always hitherto been on the other ſide. I muſt continue to repeat my old catechiſm, until I am ſufficiently illuminated to underſtand the articles of the new.

Till then, I muſt continue to aſk with ſome degree of earneſtneſs,—If any one of the objects, which I have enumerated, may poſſibly be obtained by an alliance with the Powers of the Continent,—much more if we could be ſanguine enough to ſuppoſe that ſuch an opening might ariſe, as would lead to the attainment of them *all*,—as would

would lead to the reduction of France within her ancient limits, and to the replacing Europe nearly in the ſituation in which It ſtood before the commencement of the War;—whether or no it is poſſible for a Member of the Britiſh Parliament to entertain ſo extraordinary and perverſe an ambition as to be deſirous of having it to ſay hereafter, 'All this this might perhaps have been accompliſhed, but by a ſingle Motion I prevented it all?'

Underſtand me, Sir, however—that I do not mean to undertake that if the Honourable Gentleman's Motion ſhould *not* paſs, all this *will* therefore be accompliſhed. We are debating now, not whether or no ſuch and ſuch exertions will lead to ſuch and ſuch reſults; but whether or no we ſhall gratuitouſly throw away the only chance which we have for the exertions being made. The Honourable Gentleman does not affirm, that Europe cannot be ſaved;—he only deſires that *we* may have no ſhare, that we may give no encouragement for ſaving it.—In anſwer to ſuch a propoſition, it is not neceſſary for me to argue (what is not denied) that the ſucceſs of the experiment is probable;—it is only neceſſary for me to aſk,—whether its ſucceſs is ſo improbable, and its nature ſo unintereſting, that you will determine beforehand that it ought not to be tried?

The Honourable Gentleman, however, for his part, declares, that he " waſhes his hands of the whole buſineſs." The Honourable Gentleman has a habit, Sir, (which I do not mention, to diſapprove it) of appealing to the teſtimony of his conſcience, and of holding out to his opponents the miſeries which muſt accrue from " pillows ſtufft with thorns." Has the Honourable Gentleman ever conſidered the preſent ſituation of Switzerland, in this point of view? And is he ſo eager to " waſh his hands" of any ſhare in her poſſible emancipation?—Is it neceſſary as a balm to his conſcience,—will it ſtrew his pillow with roſes, —to be able to ſay to himſelf—' If the People of ' Switzerland ſucceed in breaking the galling fetters ' of an intolerable and bloody tyranny, thank God, ' *I* have given no aid to their efforts.—*I* can lay ' my hand upon my heart and declare, that for ' ought *I* would have done for them, or would ' have encouraged them to do for themſelves,—the ' Swiſs ſhould have continued to groan in bitterneſs ' of ſorrow, in abaſement and deſpair.—Fight your ' own battles, miſerable Swiſs!—England has no ' ſympathy with your ſufferings!—Bind tighter ' their fetters, ſanguinary Directory — You have ' nothing to dread from Engliſh interference!

' Bleed, bleed, poor Country!
' Great Tyranny, lay thou thy baſis ſure,
' For Goodneſs dares not check thee!'

Such

Such, Sir, is the language of the Honourable Gentleman's Motion. But ſuch, I truſt, is not the ſenſe of thoſe who have heard it. I too will appeal to the conſcientious feelings of individuals. I might appeal to their recorded profeſſions in the almoſt unanimous Vote upon the Addreſs to his Majeſty at the beginning of the Seſſion: — but I confeſs, when I can reach the heart and ſpirit, I prefer a direct appeal to them, to any argument that reſts on mere formal ties or technical obligations. I might remind every Gentleman who hears me, that he has concurred in an Addreſs to the Throne, expreſſing his hearty hope that the Opening afforded by the glorious ſucceſſes of his Majeſty's arms may lead to "*the general Deliverance of Europe*;" and pledging himſelf, in no equivocal manner, to aſſiſt with his voice and council in the proſecution of this important object. I might require them to reconcile, if they can, the pledge there taken with a Motion which contradicts both its letter and its meaning. — But I prefer going home with every man to his own boſom, and deſiring him to remember, — what were his firſt individual impreſſions upon receiving the account of Lord Nelſon's ſtupendous achievement? — what was the language of every ſociety in which he happened to be converſant? — The firſt ſentiment undoubtedly was that of thanks and praiſe to the heroes who had thus exalted the name, the power, and the glory, of their

their Country, and of humble gratitude to that Providence which had ſo ſignally proſpered their exertions.—But next—what occurred to every man's feelings and underſtanding?—what was the queſtion which immediately ſucceeded to the firſt burſt of wonder, the firſt tranſport of thankfulneſs, the firſt emotions of rapture and delight?—I ſee I am anticipated—"*What effect will this have upon the Powers of the Continent?*"—This was the queſtion aſked and echoed by a thouſand tongues. What then was the meaning of this queſtion? Was it the offſpring of cold ſpeculation? of idle curioſity?—No. It ſprung from the inſtantaneous, and almoſt inſtinctive, conviction, that, in ſpite of all the ſophiſticated argument that may be urged to diſſuade us from a generous ſympathy with the fates and fortunes of other Nations, we *have* an intereſt in the liberties of the Continent;—that *our* aſſurance is doubly ſure when thoſe around us are preſerved from deſtruction;—that *we* can be but precarioufly ſafe, ſo long as there is no ſafety for *the reſt of Europe.*

Depend upon it, Sir, in all queſtions which partake equally of reaſon and of feeling, the firſt impreſſions of a good heart and ſound mind are rarely to be diſtruſted. They may be ſanguine;—they may be romantic;—they may repreſent the object deſired as much nearer, than in the practical purſuit

it

it turns out to be;—but, as to the object itself, they are seldom misdirected. And I believe that any man of honest and liberal feelings, who can recollect what were his first impressions upon any subject, in the consideration of which the heart as well as the understanding was engaged, will find that, in consulting those impressions, he has not been led astray.

How stands the case in the present instance? Have we any reason to repent or to be ashamed of the wishes that sprung up in our bosoms upon this occasion? Was the impulse too generous, and must it be restrained? Was the benevolence too large, and must it be contracted? — What new circumstances have arisen to vary our original view of the subject? Has England become less powerful to interfere? Has the slavery of the Continent been lightened? or the tyranny of France softened or subdued?

Or has some disposition for Peace been manifested by the Enemy?—such as throws difficulty in the way of any hostile and offensive operations against them; and requires that we should rest on our arms until their intentions shall be more clearly explained?—I have heard of nothing of this sort.—Has the Honourable Gentleman?— He has mentioned nothing of it. — He has not pretended that

France

France is willing to negotiate.—He has not adviſed that *we* ſhould propoſe a Negotiation.

He has indeed given it as his opinion that Peace is deſirable; and he has drawn ſome arguments to this effect from Ireland, from the Eaſt Indies, and from St. Domingo. I ſhall not follow him into theſe arguments; both becauſe I think that they may all of them, with much greater propriety, be reſerved for ſeparate diſcuſſion in their due time; and becauſe, unleſs this Motion were to be underſtood diſtinctly as a Motion for Peace, I do not ſee how they can be made to bear upon the preſent diſcuſſion.

But does the Honourable Gentleman intend his Motion as a Motion for Peace?—Then indeed I ſhould have a worſe opinion of it than I had before. For is this the way to go about ſuch a buſineſs, with any proſpect, or with any ſerious appearance of a deſire, of ſucceſs? If the Honourable Gentleman really thinks this a moment for opening a Negotiation—why has he not the candour and manlineſs to ſay ſo? Let him bring the matter diſtinctly to a queſtion; and let us argue it. I have no heſitation in ſaying that it is my decided opinion that this is *not* the moment. But my opinion is more decided ſtill, that, *if* this *were* the moment, the Honourable Gentleman has choſen

the very worſt poſſible way for availing ourſelves of the Opening.

Is it dignity, and etiquette, and national honour, that ſtand in the way of a more direct attempt at Negotiation? Is it neceſſary in the Honourable Gentleman's judgment that France ſhould make the firſt overtures?—I confeſs, Sir, I have no ſuch delicacy: and if the moment ſeemed to me proper for any overtures at all, I ſhould not raiſe much ſquabble about who ſhould offer or who ſhould receive them. But if the Honourable Gentleman has this delicacy, mark, I entreat you, how delicately he manages it. He will not ſpeak *to* France, but he would ſpeak *at* her. He will not propoſe—not he—that we ſhould ſay to the Directory, "Will you make peace?" No, Sir, we are merely to ſay to ourſelves, loud enough for the Directory to overhear us, "I wiſh "theſe french Gentlemen would make an over-"ture to us."—Now, Sir, does *this* ſave the dignity of the Country? or is it only a ſneaking, ſhabby way of doing what, if fit to be done at all, muſt, to have any ſerious effect, be done openly, unequivocally, and directly?—But I beg the Honourable Gentleman's pardon: I miſrepreſent him;—I certainly do. His motion does not amount even to ſo much as I have ſtated. He begins farther off. The ſoliloquy which he

prompts us by his Motion is no more thna this—
" We muſt continue to make war againſt France,
" to be ſure — and we are ſorry for it — but we
" will not do it as if we bore malice. — We will
" not make an ill-natured, hoſtile kind of war
" any longer—that we wo'n't. And who knows
" but, if they ſhould happen to overhear this re-
" ſolution, as the Directory are good-natured at
" bottom, their hearts may ſoften and grow kind
" towards us—and then they will offer to make a
" peace! "—And thus, Sir, and thus only is the Motion a Motion for Peace.

But the Honourable Gentleman reproaches his Majeſty's Miniſters that they have loſt all their pacific diſpoſitions,—that they are become inveterately and incurably warlike;—that the ſpirit of moderation which he ſo much commended in the Manifeſto of laſt year is evaporated,—and that however they may have ſtood out againſt Lord Duncan's victory, that of Lord Nelſon has intoxicated and inflamed them to madneſs.

That the confidence of the Country is indeed high, I am happy to acknowledge; and that the Government partakes the ſpirit of the People, I am equally willing to believe. But that this ſpirit has ſtarted ſuddenly out of the late Victory, and is excluſively to be attributed to it, I cannot agree. It was

con-

confirmed, indeed, by that Victory,—a Victory which would have created a ſpirit if it had not found one. But that the ſpirit exiſted before the event of the firſt of Auguſt, is no derogation to the glory of that day, and is a proud acceſſion of dignity to the character of the Country. It adds new luſtre to the character of the Country, it places in a more conſpicuous light the talents and reputation of Lord Nelſon, — that before we were in poſſeſſion of the confidence which grew out of his Victory, we had the confidence to preſume it.

Let us recollect only the days and months of anxiety which we paſſed, before the intelligence of that memorable event had reached us. It was an anxiety, not of apprehenſion, but of impatience. Our prayers were put up, not for ſucceſs, but, for an opportunity of deſerving it:—We aſked, not that Nelſon might conquer Buonaparte, but, that Buonaparte might not have the triumph of deceiving and eſcaping him;—not that we might gain the battle, but, that we might find the enemy:—For the reſt we had nothing to fear.—

Concurrant pariter cum ratibus rates;
Spectent Numina Ponti, et
Palmam, qui meruit, ferat!

Standing, then, in our preſent proud and exalted ſituation, fortified by that confidence which has its

foundation in the good ſenſe, the ſpirit, the unexampled proſperity of the Nation, and which, by the bleſſing of Providence, the ſignal and glorious ſucceſſes of our arms have eſtabliſhed and confirmed,—What is the beſt advantage that can be made of ſuch a ſituation?—'Hoard up your ſafety for 'your own uſe,'—ſays the Motion of the Honourable Gentleman. 'Lend a portion of it to other 'Nations, that it may be returned to you tenfold, 'in the preſervation and ſecurity of the world,'—is the dictate of a larger, and, I think, a ſounder policy.

But the Nations of the Continent, the Honourable Gentleman will tell us, ſtood by, while we were engaged in a ſtruggle in which our very exiſtence was at ſtake, without offering any aſſiſtance, or manifeſting any intereſt in our preſervation:—Undoubtedly, ſo they did; and, undoubtedly, as the Honourable Gentleman inſinuates, our revenge is now in our power.—We may tell thoſe, who abandoned us at that moment of peril, that it is now our turn to take breath, while they are contending; that to us is now the reſpite, and to them the toil;—that as they left us contentedly to our fate, we conſign them unpityingly to theirs.—We may do this in ſtrict retaliation: But I think a Britiſh Houſe of Commons will feel that we have a nobler vengeance in our power. We have it in our power

to

to ſay to the Nations of Europe: "You deſerted "us at our utmoſt need;—but the firſt uſe that "we make of our proſperity is to invite you to "partake of it. We diſdained to call you in, "reluctant as you appeared, to ſhare our dan-"ger; but, we are now by our own exertions "ſecure;—come now, and take ſhelter under "our ſecurity."

Sir, they were wiſe words that were ſpoken by a great ſtateſman and orator of ancient times, under circumſtances not wholly unlike the preſent circumſtancesof the world.—"If by any ſuper-human teſtimony,—for to ſuch a paradox no teſtimony merely human could poſſibly obtain belief,—if by an Angel from Heaven I were to be aſſured,—that the farther the Enemy puſhed his conqueſts over other Countries—the more territory he acquired—the more Governments he ſubverted—the more Nations he ſubdued,—by ſo much the more quiet, the more harmleſs, the more friendly neighbour he would be to this Country:—I proteſt that I would not, even with this view, and under theſe conditions, conſent to give my vote for the ſlavery of Europe.—But if there be no man upon earth who will venture to aſſert ſo monſtrous a propoſition;—if the very reverſe of all this be demonſtrably true;—if every ſtep that the Enemy takes upon the Continent is a ſtep to the accompliſhment

pliſhment of our deſtruction,—if every city that he ranſacks, every diſtrict that he acquires, is a fund of wealth, and a levy of ſoldiers, to be employed hereafter in an exterminating war againſt us;—then, in God's name, to what do We look? or wherefore are We heſitating?"

Since then, Sir, this Motion appears to me to be founded on no principle of policy or neceſſity; ſince, if it be intended for a cenſure on Miniſters,—it is unjuſt, if for a controul,—it is nugatory;—as it's tendency is to impair the power of proſecuting War with vigour, and to diminiſh the chance of negotiating Peace with dignity, or concluding it with ſafety;—as it contradicts without reaſon, and without advantage, the eſtabliſhed policy of our anceſtors;—as it muſt degrade in the eyes of the world the character of this Country;—as it muſt carry diſmay and terror throughout Europe; and above all as it muſt adminiſter conſolation, and hope, and power, and confidence to France;—I ſhall give it my moſt hearty and decided negative. 12 MR 58

FINIS.

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——— Quis talia fando
Temperet à lachrymis?